

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

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INFO AMCONSUL HONG KONG

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

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CINCPAC

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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, MILI, CH

SUBJ: DEBATE OVER MILITARY PRIORITIES CONTINUES

REF: HONG KONG 5571

1. TWO RECENT ARTICLES IN PRC PRESS SUPPORT
ARGUMENTS OF THOSE WHO ARE UNWILLING TO GIVE GREATER
PRIORITY OR PREFERENCE TO THE MILITARY. IN A
MAY 27 PEOPLE'S DAILY ARTICLE ENTITLED "POLITICS COMES
OUT OF PICKLED VEGETABLES" CHIEH SHIH ARGUES THAT
THE PLA SHOULD MAINTAIN THE TRADITIONS OF THE CIVIL
WAR DAYS WHEN THE MILITARY SHARED THE DEPRIVATIONS
OF THE COMMON PEOPLE. HE ACCUSES LIN PIAO OF HAVING
TRIED TO STIR UP PLA DISSATISFACTION BY CLAIMING THAT
"THE LIVING STANDARD OF THE LOWER-LEVEL MILITARY
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CADRES HAS FALLEN." ARTICLE ARGUES THAT MILITARY
LIVING STANDARD SHOULD OF COURSE RISE WITH THAT
OF CIVILIANS, BUT THAT PLA SHOULD NEVER LOSE ITS SPIRIT
OF "ARDUOUS STRUGGLE".

2. IN A MAY 30 ARTICLE IN KUANGMING DAILY ENTITLED
"NUCLEAR WARHEADS ARE A PAPER TIGER", CHIANG KUO-TIEN,

DESCRIBED AS A WORKER, ARGUES THE MAOIST VIEWPOINT THAT MEN, NOT WEAPONS, ARE THE DECISIVE ELEMENT IN WARFARE. HE WRITES THAT JUST AS THE PLA'S FAMED RELIANCE ON MILLET AND RIFLES WAS SUFFICIENT IN THE DAYS OF CONVENTIONAL WARFARE, IT WILL REMAIN SO IN AGE OF CONTINUOUS DEVELOPMENT OF GUIDED MISSILES AND NUCLEAR WEAPONS. CITING EXAMPLES FROM THE KOREAN AND INDOCHINA WARS, CHIANG PROCLAIMS THAT IF THE SOVIETS "DARE TO LAUNCH A NUCLEAR WAR, ONLY THEY THEMSELVES WILL BE DESTROYED". WHILE ACKNOWLEDGING IN PASSING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF MODERN WEAPONS AND NOTING CHINA'S ACQUISITION OF THEM, HE CONCLUDES THAT PRC IS "NOT SUPERSTITIOUS ABOUT NUCLEAR WEAPONS", BUT RATHER PLACES ITS HOPES IN PEOPLE OF THE WORLD.

3. COMMENT: TAKEN TOGETHER, THE TWO ARTICLES CONSTITUTE STRONG ARGUMENT AGAINST RAPID EXPANSION OF MILITARY BUDGET. ON ONE HAND, PERSONAL COSTS SHOULD BE KEPT DOWN BY RETENTION OF SIMPLE LIFE STYLE; ON OTHER HAND, THERE IS NO NEED TO GO IN FOR MASSIVE PROCUREMENT OF MODERN WEAPONRY. WHILE WE SUSPECT THAT MANY MILITARY PROFESSIONALS ARE ARGUING THE OPPOSITE VIEWPOINT, IT IS EVIDENT THAT FUNDAMENTALISTS ON THIS QUESTION STILL HAVE A POWERFUL VOICE.
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